

# CAREER FOCUS

## Can you explain the Base of Preference Program?

BY MASTER SGT.  
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One of the more popular topics of discussion these days concerns assignments, and not surprisingly, I receive many questions each week regarding the Base of Preference Program.

Offering outstanding assignment opportunities, the Base of Preference Program affects both first-term and second-term Airmen; so today let's address the particulars of the program as it applies to each group.

The First-Term Airman Base of Preference Program is a reenlistment incentive under the Career Airman Reenlistment Reservation System (CAREERS) Retraining Program (see Air Force Instruction 36-2606, *Reenlistment in the United States Air Force*). In conjunction with reenlistment, first-term Airmen may request a Permanent Change of Station base of preference or a base of preference to remain in-place (base of preference in-place is only available to those in the continental United States)—this can be a powerful incentive to reenlist!

First-term Airmen may also request a base of preference in conjunction with reenlistment and retraining (see Air Force Instruction 36-2626, *Airman Retraining Program*).

Under the Base of Preference Program, Airmen may request permanent change of station, continental United States to continental United States or permanent change of station from over-

seas to the continental United States. Also, an Airman in the continental United States may apply for a permanent change of station base of preference and an in-place base of preference at the same time.

A first-term Airman permanent change of station base of preference is not authorized from the United States to overseas, or overseas to overseas, since these assignments are made in accordance with overseas permanent change of station selection priorities. Confused? Don't be, it's just a matter of talking with the right people from the Military Personnel Flight.

Of course, there is another facet of this program that affects career Airmen, and there are certain criteria that must be met when a career Airman applies for a base of preference. With a little insight, however, the process can offer excellent assignment opportunities to these Airmen as well. So what options are available?

For starters, career Airmen may request a permanent change of station base of preference from the continental United States to the continental United States or may request a base of preference to remain in-place at a U.S. location.

To help with planning, remember that career Airmen must have 41 months on station at the time of application, and at least 48 months on station before departure. This means you can begin the process of applying for a base of preference before your permanent change of station eligibility window arrives—as the saying goes, timing is everything!

In order to qualify for a base of preference, career Airmen must not already



Master Sgt. David Halvorson

be selected for permanent change of station or have an assignment selection date. Additionally, Airmen must not be an overseas volunteer or have any other voluntary applications pending, and applicants must be eligible for permanent change of station without waivers.

Note that a permanent change of station base of preference is not authorized from the continental United States to overseas, or overseas to overseas, since these assignments are made in accordance with overseas permanent change of station selection priorities.

So, there you have it! Now it's up to you to take advantage of the outstanding opportunities this program has to offer.

For more information on the Base of Preference Program and assignment process contact the Military Personnel Flight customer service, 846-5660, logon to the Air Force Military Personnel Center assignment Web page [www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afas/](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afas/), or call/e-mail your Career Assistance Advisor, 846-6636, or [david.halvorson@kirtland.af.mil](mailto:david.halvorson@kirtland.af.mil).



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## COMMAND CHIEF'S CHOICE

### Sgt. Martin Marquez

is a member of the New Mexico Army National Guard and works as an entry control officer with his fellow Airmen and Soldiers.

He ensures that all vehicles and personnel have the proper documentation for safe and secure access to Kirtland AFB.

**What do you like best about this assignment?**

I enjoy meeting a wide variety of different people who enter Kirtland AFB from all walks of life.

**What are your hobbies?**

My hobbies are working around my home with my wife and family on my

free time and attending church as often as possible.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

Hopefully, I will still be in good health and preparing to retire from the New Mexico Army National Guard as well as my civilian job at the Albuquerque Airport as a Security Screener for the Transportation Security Administration.

**What is your main goal in life?**

My main goal in life is to be a good husband and father and to be active in my neighborhood church.

## GOLD STAR

Continued from Page 1

of Gold Star Mothers to be a way to rejoin the world.

"We thought that there was something missing (and) we had to do something," Mrs. Lopez explained. "We couldn't accept his death and the way he went."

Mrs. Lopez's husband, Boney, who designates himself as a Gold Star Father and is a World War II Navy veteran, added his efforts to his wife's volunteerism through the years. In fact, when he was commander of the American Legion Post 99, his efforts along with his wife's in support of the Gold Star Mothers organization, raised \$20,900 for the wheelchair van for a Veterans Affairs nursing unit.

"We have worked at the pharmacy about 22 years," Mrs. Lopez explained, adding that a recent illness prevents her from standing for long times to pack mail order medications to veterans and prevents her from participating in volunteer service. The couple also has given much time to the Spinal Cord Unit at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Albuquerque.

The Gold Star Mothers, Mrs. Lopez said, are "not cynical, not just crying." Activities range from social, attending the organizational meetings, to annually visiting a member's church as a group to represent the mothers of the nation to congregations.

"It's a beautiful organization," Mrs. Lopez said. "We don't just talk about our loved ones. We do work, we do a lot of work for people who need help through the (Veterans Affairs) hospital...even at homes, things you do for people—that is the work of Gold Star Mothers."

Membership in Gold Star Mothers for Mrs. Lopez has since branched into other volunteerism, including her position as historian for the local United Veterans Council of Greater Albuquerque. And, she is an honored guest at veterans ceremonies held at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial Park on Louisiana Boulevard, just outside Kirtland AFB, where Air Force members participate in the holiday functions.

The federally-chartered Gold Star Mothers established during World War I includes mothers of service members from all military branches lost in service during World War I and II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, conflicts in Beirut, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf War, Somalia, Bosnia, Saudi Arabia and all strategic areas while in service to America.

The mothers wear a white uniform decorated with gold at ceremonies and events where they represent the organization. The symbol of their loss is the gold star, which supersedes blue stars displayed by the service members' families to indicate a member is serving in active duty military, including Guard and Reserve.

To learn about joining the mothers' organization, write to the American Gold Star Mothers, Inc., 212i Leroy Place NW, Washington, D.C., 20008, telephone 202-265-0991, fax 202-265-6963, or e-mail agsmoms@aol.com.

## HIGHLAND UPDATE

### *Have you seen your middle school lately?*

**BY CARMEN GRAHAM**

Van Buren Middle School principal

The staff at Van Buren Middle School is excited about the coming school year, and reminds parents and students that education does not end in May.

Van Buren is offering summer "bridge" programs for incoming sixth graders and, in conjunction with Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute, a free, hands-on, full-day, intensive three week Summer Science Camp!

There will also be a summer basketball camp. Come by and pick up more information and applications for these exciting programs before they fill up!

Van Buren offers your students:

- ★ Increased funding for science and technology programs, training and materials through a special federal grant that designates us as a "magnet school" for scientific research and technology

- ★ 100 percent "highly qualified" staff—including APS Teacher of the Year Ada Rippberger for Manufacturing Technology (C.A.D.) lab instructor

- ★ Students "meeting standards" in all grade levels

- ★ Three new, state-of-the-art comput-

er laboratories including a wireless mobile science lab

- ★ A new library and eighth grade wing

- ★ Multiple after-school educational programs including our state-accredited Math Engineering Science Achievement (MESA) club

- ★ Sports! Including: baseball, basketball, soccer and track

- ★ Videoconferencing and distance-learning opportunities

- ★ A safe, fun, multi-cultural learning environment with a dedicated staff and administration committed to your student's success.

There are many other events and programs throughout the school year that will enhance the learning and achievement of your student. For example, students can apply to be part of the Providing Engineering and Technology Experiences for Students (PETES) program that allows kids to work with scientists on Kirtland AFB.

We encourage you to swing by your school for a tour and a copy of our promotional video on CD. You can also check us out on the Internet at [www.aps.edu/aps/vanburen/vbmsnew.htm](http://www.aps.edu/aps/vanburen/vbmsnew.htm).

## Exchange system set for change

WASHINGTON—DOD will streamline business operations across the military exchange system, much like private sector retail chains did years ago, a former chief of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service said today.

Economic and strategic realities, said retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Charles J. Wax, are driving the transformation of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, the Marine Corps Exchange and Navy Exchange operations.

"Presently, you've got three different organizations that are delivering the same benefit to the same customer," noted General Wax, who heads the Unified Exchange Task Force that is working with the services on integration planning.

By eliminating duplicate business operations across the exchange system, he maintained, "we believe we can provide a better value proposition to the customer."

Planning is expected to be complete by March 2005.